1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

## *Preface*

THE pages that follow describe scenes in the lives of a Negro people living in isolation in the interior of Dutch Guiana, South America. These Negroes are the descendants of runaway slaves imported from Africa, who took refuge in the dense Guiana bush and established African villages along the rivers whose rapids are their fortifications. The end of the seventeenth century already found these Negroes in constantly growing numbers up the Suriname River, and before the middle of the next century they were sufficiently organized to make repeated raids on the plantations for guns and gunpowder, for machetes and women. Several campaigns were conducted against them, but eventually final treaties were concluded with the Dutch owners of the colony, which guaranteed them their freedom. Today when a Bush Negro drinks with a white man his toast is "Free!"

Three tribal groups go to make up this Bush Negro population. The Saramacca tribe, of whom we write, is found in the heart of the colony along the upper reaches of the Suriname River (called by the Bush Negroes the "Saramacca," and hence so named in this book), and farther south along the Gran Rio and the Pikien Rio. This tribe has had the least contact with outside influences, and it is the Saramacca language which differs most from that spoken by the Negroes of the coastal region. The second is the Awka tribe, found mainly along the Marowyne (Maroni) River, which forms the boundary between French and Dutch Guiana; there are in addition several Awka villages on the lower Suriname. The third tribe, the Boni,



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## PREFACE

101 619 is relatively small, and is localized in the interior of French Guiana, not far from the Dutch boundary. In any consideration of the Guiana Negroes, yet a fourth group must be kept in mind—that of the Negroes of the coastal region, who remained enslaved until their emancipation in 1865.

489 The country of the Saramacca people is reached from Paramaribo, the capital and port of the colony of Suriname (Dutch Guiana), by the weekly train which goes some ninety-five miles to Kabel, where the railway meets the river. From Kabel transportation into the far interior is by dugout canoe, owned and manned by Saramacca men.

133 The country above Kabel, which the Saramacca people call the "big bush," is jungle. Over the watershed lie the Amazon basin and the forests of northern Brazil. Once in this region, the traveler has no contact with European civilization, though he is still under the protection of the Dutch Government.

121 114 The picture which we draw of the Saramacca people is based upon two field trips to Dutch Guiana, undertaken in the summers of 1928 and 1929. During our second trip we traversed the entire stretch of the Saramacca country from below Kabel, where the Awka villages are located, to the last native habitation on the Pikien Rio, beyond which are some fields, then uninhabitated miles of wilderness to the Brazilian border.

The ethnological work conducted among the Saramacca tribe of Bush Negroes and the Negroes of the coastal region of Suriname represents a portion of an investigation into the physical and cultural characteristics of the Negroes of the New World. This research, which is still in progress, has included field work in the United States, in Dutch Guiana, and in Africa, and some comparative study in the islands of the Caribbean. It began in 1923 with an inquiry into Negro-white crossing in the United States.[1] As the work progressed it became evident that the problem

[1] For the results of this portion of the investigation, see M. J. Herskovits, "The American Negro, a Study in Racial Crossing" (1928); and "The Anthropometry of the American Negro" (1931).

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clan names. He went to his mother's brother, and asked for the origin of his own clan, and the relationship that existed between the lo to which he belonged and the others.

"It is for the old men to know," his uncle replied. "When you are old, you will know these things."

"But you must tell me. It is my right," the young man insisted.

"It will be your right," the older man corrected him.

And there the matter rested. But from one, and from another, we gathered the clan names. One village belonged to one clan, its obia was confided to us, and at another village we learned the name of still another clan. So the list of names slowly grew—ten, twelve, thirteen, fourteen. But some clans were paired in a fashion we could not fathom, and when the clans are grouped so as to express the tribe as a whole, the expression that is used is that of "the twelve lo."

The clan we found to be rooted deep in the land. Each clan had its own territory, and in the region it controlled only the men of the clan might fish in the creeks or fell the hardwood trees which the white man in the city bought. All of the up-river clans had land on the lower river near the railhead, and an important down-river clan, like that of the Gankwe people, had land deep in the interior. Whether fear of invasion, on the one hand, or the need to have their own strongholds in the event of factional disputes, on the other, dictated this division of the land, it was, of course, impossible to determine. Yet it was unquestionably useful for a clan to have representation up and down the river in this fashion. Thus a man, as he traveled up or down the river, would be sure of at least one or two places where he might count on receiving the welcome due him as one who is at home among those who have come from the same "old mother," and where he might feel spiritually safe among people of his own blood, and among the same gods as those of his own village.

Village, clan, and above these the tribe. So it was that the political order of the Bush Negro was integrated. Tribal

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assemblies such as were reported from the Awka people on the Marowyne were here not called regularly. There was no central body here to make decisions. The autonomy of village and clan seemed almost unquestioned. There were, to be sure, clan alliances, but these bore more directly on the factions which had formed to control the choice of the next headman. At this krutu, therefore, which had just gathered, there were Captain Sungi, head of the Kasito or Dahomey clan, and And'u, the able chief of the Dombi people, and the headman of the Popoto people, and the headman of the Anago. But Fandya of Baikutu who headed the Nasi people was not there, nor were the Awana people represented, nor the Alabaisa, nor Kwama, nor Bi'ito, nor Fandaki, to cite some examples. Of the missing chiefs, several of them lived a considerable distance from the seat of the Granman, and indeed had been to his village but few times.

"Ai, men must krutu," Kasanya had told us one day on the river. "If a few men decide, then the others have anger in their hearts. That is not good. When the lanti meets, and all men talk, then those who came with anger cool their hearts. Talk is good."

And another time, Sedefo had found occasion to quote the proverb, "If you have not settled one thing, you cannot go on to the second." The best way was to talk things over until all men saw that what was proposed was good or bad.

4

In the krutu house of Asindopo Lantiwe the Granman began to speak.

"Mati—friends—the white man has come. He sits there. With him is his wife. She is there beside him. The man from the white man's city has come. He is there. He will speak for the white man. The white man has a cook. The cook is outside."

"So it is, G'aman," said Captain Sungi.

"Mati, the white man came. All who come to me must eat. The white man must eat."

"True, true, master of the realm."

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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1/A
[352
322
532]

## Chapter Seven

# THE ORGANIZATION OF LIFE

THERE are six tribes of Bush Negroes. These tribal divisions date back to the black rebellion in the eighteenth century. Bands of rebels fled into the bush together, and remained together within their jungle home. In Stedman's narrative of the revolt we read of a punitive expedition being sent out against the bands living along the "Serimaca" and Upper Copenam Rivers. After years of incessant warfare, a treaty of peace was concluded in 1749 with the "Serimaca rebels." The descendants of this group are known today as the *Saramaccaner* tribe. Another outbreak of rebels occurred in the Tempati Creek district; they won their freedom in 1761 by a treaty signed at the Ouca Plantation, from which they came to be called *Aucaners*. A third band of rebels, under the command of the famous Chief Bonny, probably

619 ●



1/A [For caption, see category 116, p. 204.—Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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619 gave rise to another Bush Negro nation known as the *Boni* tribe. There are also three other tribes today of less importance: the *Matawaai* on the Upper Saramacca River, the *Quintee-Matawaai* which is a sub-tribe on the Copenam, and the *Paramacca* on the Middle Marowyne with villages on both the French and Dutch sides of the river.

619 184 [582] The tribal divisions are strictly enforced. Not only is intermarriage forbidden, but each tribe has its separate government, and each is referred to locally as a "river nation." Each tribe likewise has its own territory, and any poaching by hunters, fishers, or balata bleeders is rigorously punished.

[643] The ruler of the tribe is a king, or *granman*. Among the photographs is one of old Jankoeso, the kindly shrewd ruler of the Saramaccaner nation; the Aucaner ruler, Amekti, has just died, his place probably being taken by Matodja. The Boni granman is named Awensai.

619 361 [161] The largest tribe is the Saramaccaner, with a population of about 14,000. Their village of Santi Gron (Sandy Ground), some twenty miles from Paramaribo on the Lower Saramacca River is the nearest of all Djuka villages to white civilization. But the main body of this tribe begins some ninety miles up the Surinam River from Paramaribo, and the villages are strung along the Surinam River for a hundred or more miles further on back into the interior. The names

[103] of some of these villages are: Nu Condree, Lombe, Gansee, Biodoti, Adawai, De Jun, Masumba Pratti, and Dahomey, and other towns of even more picturesque appellations: Boto-Passi, Poki Gron, Granman Condree, and many more.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Saramaccaner



There are also a few villages, belonging to this tribe, situated 619
on the lower Saramacca River, like Santi Gron, Toti Camp, 361
and Maka-Creekee. On the distant Surinam is located the poetically named village of Futu No Habbe Ackaba, The Foot That Has No Resting Place.

Every tribe is divided into several clans, or *lo*, and these lo 621
are subdivided into groups of families, called *m'beh*, relation- 614
ship being counted through the female line. These groupings 613
are direct survivals of the slave days, descendants of groups of fugitives who fled into the bush together. Among the Saramaccaners there is the *Abaisa lo* of which our friend Abaisa is the chief. Another lo is called the *Inge Peecee lo*, meaning "piece of Indian clan," referring to the marriage of a lone Indian squaw with a rebel slave, back in the old days. There is the *Companyi Nengre lo*, or "Company Negro clan" of blacks descended from the slaves who escaped from the Dutch West India Company. The *Dahomey lo* is a group of families especially skilled in the art of healing broken [759]
bones. Then there is a priesthood clan, the *Domini lo*, descended from the slaves of a plantation owner named Levy. Among the other lo are: *Matchow* (meaning axe), *Vondrake* (from a Dutch family named Van Drachte), *Baison Nengre*, *Luwangu*, *Nassi*, *Betu*, *Cumu*, *Quama*, *Papoto*, and the *Awahna lo* at Gansee.

At a strategic location on the Little Surinam River, the 361
*Pekein Rio*, dwells the Granman Jankoeso. His village is ten days up the river from Gansee. It is situated in this inaccessible spot, on an especially fierce and rapid tributary, pur-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner
Aucaner



and does not look with favour upon the white proselytizers.

The Granman can call a meeting of his captains at any time. They must attend, even though it involves days of rigorous travel. Although the captain look up to the Granman and acknowledge him as their uperior, the connexion between them is not close enough to be considered a hierarchy. The "river nations" are not nonarchies in any sense. The only laws promulgated by the Granman are those that affect the entire tribe.

Neither the captains nor the Granman have any privileges or prerogatives to set them apart from the undistinguished natives; there is no leisure class. The are all dependent upon their own efforts to earn a living, and work like anyone else in the village. Rank does not make social parasites out of them, as among us. The Granman's only external distinction is that sent by the white man, the tribute from the Dutch government. The type of social organization now prevalent among the Djukas, therefore, may be described as primitive communism.

The Aucaner, second in number to the Saramaccaner, are scattered in a less compact way over the rivers and creeks of the colony toward the French Guiana line. This tribe numbers about 6000 in population.

Just below the realm of the Saramaccaner tribe, at the junction of the Sara Creek and the Surinam River (see map facing page), are some of the Aucaner villages: Koffay Camp, Lebbi Doti, Lasa Baka, Pitchong, Baku, and other settlements. There are few villages on the long Sara Creek, but

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner



after a day's portage from its source one may strike the Tosso Creek, which brings the lower Sara Creek Aucaners into the distant Tapanahoni River, where exist the main body of the Aucaner tribe. They inhabit both banks of the Tapanahoni, from its mouth where it flows into the Marowyne River to some distance beyond the far Jai Creek. The Aucaners, like the Saramaccaners, are divided into several lo or clans. The names of these are as follows: the *Missi Jon lo* and *Otto lo*, which are the most powerful and to which belong the families of the Granmans; the *Perica lo, Pata lo M'beh lo, Ju Nengre lo, Penasi lo, N'Yafi lo, Bray lo, Compai lo, Deekah lo, La Paix lo, Ke-o Condree lo,* and *Pooloogoodoo lo*. The head of the lo is called *Papa fu ah lo*, "father for the lo."

Beside these, the Aucaners have also divided their tribe into two separate parts, but they are both under the same Granman. These divisions are known as the *Uppo Nengre* (Upper Negro) and *Below Nengre* (Below Negro). The boundary between them being the Gran Hollo (Big Hole) Falls in the Tapanahoni River. The territory of the Below Nengre begins past the mouth of the Gran Creek and extends up the Tapanahoni River to the falls above mentioned. The islands in the Marowyne belong to this division and their territory also extends to the Dutch side of the Lawa River up to Aboona Sungu Falls (a man named Aboona sank there), which forms the boundary between the Aucaners and the Boni tribe in that region. Some names of the villages belonging to the Below Nengre Aucaners of that dis-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner
Saramaccaner
Boni



619 184 In general appearance and culture the Aucaners vary little from the other large tribe, the Saramaccaners.

[531] The art motifs and their treatment as displayed on the Aucaner wood carvings as a rule differ from those of the Saramaccaners. On the other hand, some of the pieces were found to be practically identical.

The Aucaner talkee-talkee also differs from that of the Saramaccaners, the former being more like the speech of the [117 198 191] Town Negroes. The Aucaners have no deepee-talkee or odo as have the Saramaccaners, but they have a dialect known as *Koropina* where a *p* or an *m* is spoken before the vowels in a word for the purpose of confusing strangers. A similar custom is prevalent among the Negroes of Curaçao, Dutch West Indies.

[291] The dress of the Aucaners is the same as that of the Saramaccaners, excepting that they affect more often the breast-cloth, the *wassapangye*, and the head-cloth, the *mussu*.

Among the Aucaners the toga garment is called the *yembah*, while it is called a camissa by the Saramaccaners. The [illegible] palm leaves is called *chilpinga-bo*, the Aucaners and *azang pau* by the Saramaccaners.

[262 606 194] The system of food taboos and general culture are the same. There is no mother-in-law taboo among either the Aucaners or the Saramaccaner tribe.

[161 648] The Boni tribe, which consists of about 900 people, is descended from escaped slaves who crossed the Marowyne River into French Guiana and who were allowed to remain there unmolested by the French authorities. This is the only

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Bonni



Although the huts are of Africanesque architecture, similar 342
to those of the Aucaner tribe, there is, at times, more wooden board in the construction and less thatch.

During the expedition of 1928 we were informed that the 316
Bonis, particularly at the village of Apatoo, were conversant 326
with the old West African method of smelting iron and manufacturing it into implements of various kinds. This claim proved to be entirely groundless. If there is any iron ore in the neighbourhood, these tribesmen do not know where it is, and most certainly do not understand how to smelt it.

It was in Africa that the art of iron working is supposed to have originated, and the iron work of West Africa, whence the Djukas came, is a thing of beauty. But the Djukas have lost this hereditary art. Among the Bonis, the work in metal seems to be limited to the soldering of copper French coins to bracelets made of iron or copper pipe, which they procure by trade or from the machinery of long abandoned French gold exploitations. They also make brass bracelets and anklets of considerable width out of brass piping obtained from a similar source. The piping is split with the sharp blade of an axe and hammered into shape with the blunt end. We were able to obtain a stiletto with an iron blade and a handle of brass riveted to it with copper, but we are under the impression that the blade, at least, is of French or Italian manufacture.

In their general habits as regards hunting, fishing, agri- 184
culture, canoe building, social customs and structure, dress, 619
and so on, the Bonis are quite similar to the Aucaners. They speak a dialect of talkee-talkee which has distinct differences [191
from the Aucaner and the Saramaccaner in that it contains a 197]
good deal of French patois.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni



184 good deal of French patois. Most of the people also speak a
619 fluent and, at times, a good French, which they have learned from the freed convicts, the libérés, of the largest French prison colonies in Guiana at St. Laurent, situated about forty miles from the mouth of the Marowyne River. Some of the
439 Negroes of this tribe, as well as some of the Aucaners, sometimes visit St. Laurent for purposes of barter and trade. They also occasionally aid the French in transporting loads in their canoes up to the remaining placer mine.

648 These Bush Negroes have seen thousands of white convicts and libérés. They have seen white men under the most degrading conditions possible to human existence on this planet. They have seen them shot down in the street. They have seen them rummaging in cans of tropical garbage that even a dog would shun, or escaping through the jungles, simply starving, hunted animals. Their point of view in regard to this may be summarized in the answer received when the question was put to one Boni as to what he thought of the Penal Colony; he said: *"Francie mong sung go dede"*—"Frenchmen soon die."

But just across the river from St. Laurent is the little settlement of Albina and the *Doocie mong* (Dutchmen). The Dutch have armed soldiers there so that the escaping libérés cannot cross.

322 As among the other tribes, the Boni are adept in the carving of wood. They make the usual kinds of highly decorated implements, such as large combs, pot stirrers, food trays carved out of sections of a tree trunk. The door posts and façades of their huts are often elaborately carved

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Paramaca



322 The small Paramacca tribe does much less in the way of wood carving than do the others of the Djukas. This was evidenced by the few pieces we were able to collect and was also known to be a fact by the Aucaner Bush Negroes who accompanied us to the Paramacca district. The motifs displayed upon the articles collected were practically identical with those found on Aucaner pieces.

123 In fairness to the Paramaccas, however, it must be mentioned from our experience among other tribes that collecting is much facilitated when one is cordially known. On a second or third expedition one is able to collect many times more specimens than upon a first introduction. The Bush Negroes are at first shy as a rule and not anxious to part with their belongings.

184 The tribes do not fraternize much with each other. Some travellers report that the Aucaner and Boni tribes feel themselves superior to the others because they have less contact with the white man. If this is true, we cannot report any personal observation of it. A traveller has no more difficulty among them than among the Saramaccaner people. Some ill-feeling between the Aucaners and Saramaccaners dates back to the slave revolt, when the former observed their peace treaty so scrupulously as even to aid the slave-owners in re-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



It is impossible to trace all of the individual African tribes 175
from which the Djukas came. The relationships have been too much confused by the ravages of time and the depredations of the slave trade. The first slavers plied their trade along the coast, picking up a few natives here and there, but with the passing of years the growing demand for slaves rendered this practice inadequate. So the slave factories were established, and the trade extended far back into the interior of Africa. The resulting body of slaves was a conglomeration of natives from practically every tribe around the Bight of [417] Benin, the Abo, the Cõnia, the Blitai, Congo, Gango, Konree, Riemba, Loango, etc.

Aside from the aforementioned, Douglas enumerates the following African groups as contributing slaves to Surinam: the Calabari, Doomakookoo, Foola (or Fooloppo), Gola (or Gongola), Mende, Madingo, Papa, Pro, Temne, Tjamba, and Wan-Wie Negroes. The Negro woman, Semire, sentenced to death in 1836 for killing and eating Negro children, must have been from one of these tribes. This suggests that the practice of cannibalism was not unknown among some of them. Douglas also cites Hartsinck for other African tribes and regions whence came many of the Negro slaves of Dutch Guiana:

"The Ardras or Dongo Negroes came from a part about 176
fifty miles north-east from Ardras, and do not make the best slaves. Born in slavery and brought up for agriculture, they do not like service, but when treated well they are good slaves. The men, women, and children have for a mark some

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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"One may find also Abo and Papa Negroes, who are very willing when treated well; the last named have a certain poison under their nails with which they are known to poison their adversaries so that they pine away.

"The Coromantyn Negroes have a good heart but cannot stand wrongs or punishment without reason, and if this happens they take a gun or a knife to take vengeance, and if they are not successful in this they very often cut their own throats. These Negroes are very well built, they have no marks whatsoever, only a very smooth black skin.

"The Loango Negroes or Gangoo Negroes are the very worst. They are cannibals and will kill one of their own kind to feast upon when celebrating the wedding of their king. They also file their teeth so as to be able to bite off one's finger. They are hated and feared by the other tribes for their treachery and cruelty, and when these people desert they hide themselves in the bush living on all kinds of reptiles such as lizards, snakes, frogs, and other creeping reptiles."

Thus, some idea may be obtained of the varied sources whence came the ancestors of the present-day Bush Negro tribes.

Perhaps it will suffice to say that the Djukas are descended from the tribes of the Gold Coast, Ivory Coast, Slave Coast, Dahomey, Nigeria, Muni, Cameroons, Liberia, and the general adjacent equatorial interior of West Africa. Most of these natives were forest people, and after being transported across the ocean they could adapt themselves without great difficulty to the similiar jungles of Surinam.

/10 cont./

162 131 36 [103] The Boni, about 1,000 in number, occupy the course of the Lawa between Abounasounga Falls to the north and the falls of the Litani to the south. Their "great villages," that is, their residential villages, are: Agodé (Boniville), Kotika, Asisi, Loka, Papaï'ston, Kormotibo, Lapé, and l'Enfant Perdu. Three small villages founded more recently are established on the lower course of the 563 Maroni. The territorial implantation of the Boni has been disturbed by the settlement of Creole gold miners on their territory 178 for three quarters of a century. Their demographic situation is mediocre and their tribal organization, compared to that of the [141] other tribes, has lost much of its strength. However, they still make up a human grouping full of strength and originality.

131 361 [162] [161] 648 [619] The Djuka, whose "great villages" are in Surinam territory on the /11/ Tapanahoni, can be evaluated at 7,000 to 8,000 in total. At the height of demographic expansion, their farming villages swarm on both banks of the Maroni and on the islands, penetrating more and more deeply into the interior of French Guiana, where in places they form small temporary groupings living in symbiosis with the Creole gold miners; the Boni recognize their right to cross their territory but not that of establishing villages in it.

433 645 [401] 745 [98] [66] [182] For a century the economy of the refugee Blacks has been founded on a symbiosis with the Europeans and Creoles; they furnish specialized labor (construction, but above all, transport) in exchange for relatively high wages. This economy finds itself threatened by the gradual disappearance of gold mining; there is developing a tendency toward temporary emigration to the European work yards of Saint-Laurent analogous to that of the Saramaka of Surinam to French Guiana. This is a serious threat to the interior cohesion of the tribes.

/15 cont./ THUS IT WAS AT
the time of the Lawa gold rushes (1890) that Grand Man Anato caused rent to be paid by the Creole miners who were settling in the region. But this practice, excessive when the small portion of this territory actually occupied by the Boni is considered, ended up by falling into disuse. Nowadays things have fallen into the opposite extreme, and the Boni find themselves having no right, customary or otherwise, over the country of their ancestors, the first comer, even of the Creoles from the British West Indies, can settle anywhere, dislocating the apportionment of the land among lineages. This situation has been harmful to the life of the tribe by contributing to the scattering of the peopling. Perhaps it is not too late to remedy the situation. An /16/ /Figure 2 appears here./ /17/ African tribe cannot live wholesomely if there are no definite relationships, entailing unquestioned rights, between the group and the land.

The following modus vivendi has been in force for many years:

a) The Djuka may circulate freely across Boni country, but they may not establish villages in it; if they wish to make clearings there, they must ask for permission from the grand man. Otherwise they have the right to fish on the Tanpok and the Wanit.

b) The Creoles may settle anywhere and make their clearings where the lands are not used. But that does not modify in the minds of the Boni the lineages' rights over the land; this occupation is regarded as creating no new right; for example, the Dogin habitation is built on the lands of Kormotibo village.

c) The Boni reserve for themselves along with the Oayana Indians the exclusive right to fish on the Litani and the Maroni. On these rivers the Djuka do not have the right to penetrate.

The Boni may be computed at a little less than 1,000 persons all told.

/27 cont./

614 The Aw.B.2, on whom we could not get sure information
[123] because this very closed group did not cooperate willingly with the inquiry, appear to be in a very similar situation, with the difference that their genealogy goes back much farther in time and they no longer remember the origin of this fraction nor the
[184] circumstances which tied its fate to that of the Aw.B.1. This group apparently has a separate kinu.

613 The Awara Bakka lineage is in a special situation from the
614 point of view of exogamy, for not only are there marriages be-
582 tween one fraction and another, but there are two within the same
[183] fraction and between relatively near relatives. Thus this group, without openly rejecting the law of exogamy, does not attach the same importance to it as do the others.

613 The Afi lineage. This lineage was founded by Afi, wife of
[101] a man from Papaïston, who came to live with him. Like the Toïna lineage, she had come from the small tribe called Bakabuchi which lived in Surinam. However, the Afi and Toïna lineages are not of the same matrilineal origin and the present members of each of the two small groups have no common worship. All of
[571] them have lost every tie with their original tribe, and their social life is entirely dependent on that of the Boni group which has taken them in.

[621] Afi settled near Kormotibo. This site is abandoned by her descendants who live, most of them, in Asisi, the rest in Kormotibo.

The lineage has lost every tie with its group of origin.
[619] Nevertheless, it is assumed that if one of them wanted to go back there, on proving his relationship, he would take up all his rights again and could demand a site for making his clearings.

613 /28/ The process of assimilation which took place for the
621 AW.B.3 did not come into play for Afi's descendants with respect
571 to the Papaïston lineage. They are regarded as a separate family group, insufficient in number to constitute a social unit and whose members are placed under the authority of the heads of the villages

/28 cont./

613 614 984 [621] although the supposed common ancestress doubtless goes back to the beginning of the 18th century and for three generations they have been divided among four villages situated at a week's distance by boat from one another. We can, with very few chances of error, affirm that they certainly have a common matrilineal origin and that they in fact constitute one lineage.

182 619 361 [404] On this subject let us note that geographical separation cannot play the same role among the Refugee Blacks as in the African tribes of cultivators. The Refugee Blacks, whose habitat is linear along the banks of the river and who, being boatmen, are continually moving, cannot be completely isolated from one another.

613 614 571 /29/ Under these conditions, how can we explain the existence within certain lineages of individualized fractions subject to a separate kunu, such as Papaïston 2?

One can assume that these fractions do not really have the same origin as the principal group and that they result from a process of assimilation of a paternally related fragment.

We have cited the example of Aneta's descendants (Aw. B. 3). They are already integrated into the social life of the group; in two or three generations nobody will remember any longer their exact origin. But they will remain differentiated from the principal fraction of the Awara Bakka because they will still be subject to the kunu of their ancestress. [784]

121 Such are the elements we have been able to draw from a general study of kin groups among the Boni. We shall look for other data in the study of the implantation of these groups on the soil, and especially of the apportionment of lands among them; finally, we shall study family custom and especially inheritance.

A complete understanding of the kinship system and its functioning can be obtained only in the future by following the evolution of kin groups, the formation of new villages; and the designation of new headmen.

/41 cont./

621 The principle behind the constitution of the Boni villages
613 is, as we have said, the localization of the matrilineage. Men
[591] and women live in the village of their maternal kin; the wife does not leave her village to join her husband, who comes to visit her from time to time without ceasing, himself, to live in the midst of his own lineage.

The composition of each village thus corresponds, at least in principle, to the group of living people on the genealogical table. But a certain number of exceptions are observed:

[167] -A certain number of men (about 20 out of 800 persons) have emigrated for good and can no longer be counted in the population of the villages;

● [619] -On the other hand, a dozen Djuka and Saramaka married
[591] to Boni women have settled permanently in the villages and have been included in the census.

125 We have tried to estimate with as much precision as possible
128 the age of the people concerned, by means of events of known
[173] date which they remember, from the trip of the explorer Crevaux (1878) to the war 1939-45. We have established a local chronology, reproduced as an appendix at the end of the present chapter.

125 The demographic survey, which has been the subject of another publication (1), was conducted parallel with the sociological

[113] 1. "Etude démographique comparée des Noirs Réfugiés Boni et des Indiens Oayana du Haut-Maroni /Comparative Demographic Study of the Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana Indians of the Upper Maroni/," in Population, éditions de l'INED, 1959, No. 2. 2/A

investigation.

2/A [See S. Hurault, This file-- Analyst.]

/58 cont./

It is fitting to make an exception of the case of OWétiti (Papaïston) and OMa Imma (Kotika), who separated from their groups with their numerous descendants in order to found villages on the lower course of the river. These groups continue to consider themselves Boni; they are the nuclei of future villages.

For the same reasons it is difficult to get exact figures on immigration. About 100 Djuka and Saramaka have founded farming villages in Boni country but keep all their ties with their villages of origin; some 30 of them have married Boni women; one can estimate that some 15 have completely bound up their fate with the Boni and can be considered as integrated into the villages in which they have settled.

All in all one can estimate that emigration and immigration of adult men, both very insignificant, compensate for each other; they have practically no importance on the social plane (since only the residence of the women has any influence upon the grouping of the lineages) or on the demographic plane; with the Boni the pyramid of ages constructed from the census of the villages represents very faithfully the demographic state of the population and lends itself to precise calculations of mortality (1).

1. It is not the same for the majority of African populations either because of emigration to the cities or polygamy. The presence of several average polygamists in a village is enough to render completely erroneous the counts of cross-sections by age.

The founding of new lineages results from the immigration of several Djuka women, some having come to settle permanently near their husbands, others brought up by their fathers in a Boni village. Half a dozen such cases occur in each generation, but

/58 cont./

not all result in the founding of a new lineage, either because the women are sterile or because only one or two surviving children remain who go back to live among their maternal kin. The more children a woman has, the more she tends to settle permanently with her descendants, for the group thus formed represents a force and can be self-sufficient as much on the material level as on the emotional level.

Four new lineages have been founded in the whole of Boni country during the past 50 years: /59/

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Awara Bakka 3 (Anèta) | 16 persons | on January 1, 1958 |
| Afi | 25 | -- |
| Tolna | 9 | -- |
| Poti | 8 | -- |
| Total.... | 58 persons | |

Thus these new lineages represent only $\frac{58}{810}$ = 7 per cent of the Boni.

The immigration of women from other tribes thus remains an exceptional phenomenon which has few effects on the social and demographic levels. The development of the Boni as a nation results only from the natural movement of the population. Study of the genealogies forces the conclusion that when the members of these four small lineages are eliminated, the whole of the Boni are descended from only six or seven women who lived at the end of the 18th century. Few examples of such growth are to be found.

Absence of division of the villages into quarters. We have seen that the custom of the Refugee Blacks is opposed to all that could alter the system of classificatory kinship and leads to the individualization of segments within the lineage. This principle is translated very clearly in the structure of the villages, where one observes no tendency at all toward division into separate quarters.

/63 cont./

that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineages.

/64 cont./

## Functioning of the Lineage

613

We have seen that the effective social group, ie. fraction of an extended lineage, is a social unit possessing all that is necessary to a human group to live, settling its differences and enforcing its rights:

--Ancestor worship;

--A head filling at the same time the role of priest of the ancestors and judge;

--Collective rights over a portion of land.

613
• 619 A lineage could live perfectly independent without any tie of dependence vis-à-vis any tribe whatsoever. Actually, there exist in the interior of Surinam several lineages of very ancient origin (which are joined under the name of Bakabuchi • back of the bush) who live totally independent.

613 No privileged line of descendants exists within a lineage and
561 the only hierarchy recognized is that of age, or more exactly of closeness to the founding ancestress.

613 Collective tutelage of uncles in the classificatory sense is
561 effective only in childhood, but the principle of it continues
604 during the whole lifetime. In a discussion a man must avoid violently contradicting one of his "uncles" and finds it normal that more weight is attached to the opinion of this uncle than to his own. In 1956 we were subjected to some disagreeable incidents due to a bossman who was the classificatory uncle (although the same age) of the motorman of his boat; the motorman hesitated to order him vigorously as he did his other bossman and he, on his part, did not fail to remind his "nephew" of the respect due him.

/139 cont./

684 Committing pikadu is one of the most serious offenses that
688 a Refugee Black can commit; of course, as in the rest of the moral prescriptions, no abstract principle is called on: the elders teach the children from their earliest years: "If you com-
[613] mit pikadu, you will fall ill or die." The head of the lineage inflicts severe punishments on the guilty people to boot: for the man, to make a large number of planks with an adze; for the woman, to prepare and winnow as preparation for the next broko de several touques /cans/ of rice, a long and tedious job.

588 However, if in spite of insults and blows a man and woman of the same her absolutely insist on marrying, people end up, for the sake of peace and quiet, by accepting the ac-
[169] complished fact. They go to the fraga tiki to make an offering
[178] of tafia to the ancestors to ask them to forgive the offense
[182] committed. No reprobation extends to the children born of this union.

613 In the Awara Bakka lineage, which has practically re-
588 jected the law of exogamy, the principle of a sanction remains
[684] and there is a pretense of chasing the guilty ones across the village.

Not being able to use coercion and not having the right to expel a member of the lineage, captain and council can exert no material sanction.

613 The same notion of pikadu is attached to unions between
684 persons of the same patrilineage, although these patrilineages have no effective organization and exist only by the transmission of the fundamental interdiction, bwasi kina.

• 8/9 Before concluding an official or even clandestine union, the man and woman make sure that they do not have the same bwasi kina and in such a case give up their project; that, even if they are from different tribes, for example a Boni woman and a Saramaka.

/140 cont./

184 589 Whatever its origin, we should note that the Saramaka custom has no relation, as far as its legal content is concerned, to the levirate, nor to the inheritance of widows as it is practiced in numerous African societies. It does not correspond in any way to the transmission of a right over the widow, since this right does not exist; it probably results from the idea that the widow is better protected from the effects of the dead man's jealousy if she marries one of his brothers. Besides, she may [613] choose from among all his classificatory brothers, in the matrilineage as in the patrilineage, which assures her of a wide [586] choice. She can break this union without any compensation after some months of living together and resume complete liberty.

582 Statistics of marriages between kin groups. We have listed on the table opposite, the total unions for which we have been able to identify with certainty the kinship of the spouses, including those broken by divorce and death. Their total number is 411.

582 619 The table emphasizes the more or less great frequency of unions between /141/ [table appears here] //142/ such-and-such kin groups, as well as the frequency of unions between Boni women and men of other tribes, DJUKA PARAMAKA, and SARAMAKA.

Out of a total of 411 unions of Boni women one notes:
--327 with BONI (80%);
-- 50 with DJUKA (12%);
-- 21 with SARAMAKA (5%);
-- 5 with PARAMAKA (1%);
[618] -- 8 with Creoles from Surinam (2%)

The proportion of intertribal marriages (20%) is high; it results from the frequent presence on the Maroni of Djuka or Saramaka boatmen coming to carry on transport. The reciprocal is not true; marriages between Boni men and women

[Text Continues on P. 209]

Marriage of Boni women of the lineages:




S:Hurault--208 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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/142 cont./

582 of other groupings are rare; that is because the Boni have al-
619 most no occasion to frequent the Tapanahoni, where economic activity is nil.

For 123 married men of the villages on the French bank there were in November, 1958, 11 unions with Djuka women, or 8 per cent. No marriage to Saramaka or Paramaka women existed.

582 The table confirms besides that marriages between mem-
613 bers of different kin groups are entirely free and are not subject to any preoccupation with exchange or reciprocity. For example, out of 60 unions between Boni women of the Lapé lineage and Boni men, we have:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | with | men | of | the | Dipélu I lineage |
| 7 | -- | -- | - | - | Dipélu II -- |
| 7 | -- | -- | - | - | Papaïsnon -- |
| 11 | -- | -- | - | - | Awara Bakka -- |
| 4 | -- | -- | - | - | Dj. -- |
| 5 | -- | -- | - | - | Dipélu I &c./ -- |
| 20 | -- | -- | - | - | Kotika -- |

(628) In fact, the geographical proximity of the villages has the most direct influence on unions.

582 For example a high proportion of women from
613 Kormotibo (Dip. II) married men from Papaïsnon and recipro-
628 cally.

That comes from the fact that these villages are near each other and isolated from others. It is the same for Kotika and L'Enfant Perdu (Dip. I). In the small Afi lineage, divided between Kormotibo and Asisi-Awara Bakka villages, more than half the women are married to inhabitants of these two villages.

582 Certain personal affinities and habits of living have an
619 indirect influence. For example, the Djuka boatmen passing
621 through Boni country habitually stay in Asisi-Awara Bakka, because they are received in the homes of some of their own

/142 cont./
people who have lived there for a long time. They strike up relationships with the people of Asisi, and that favors new unions. This explains the high proportion of unions between the women of this village and the Djuka (13 out of 75). On the contrary, almost no marriages to Djuka are observed in Papaïsson village, where no Djuka has settled permanently. /143/

The marriage proposal. The suitor is obliged to ask for the assent of his own mother and his uncles (at the very least the eldest of his classificatory uncles); in general he asks his father also.

If two of his classificatory uncles are expressly opposed, the plan must be abandoned. But there is no possible sanction for disobedience.

The suitor does not make the proposal himself; after making sure of the agreement of the girl he sends two persons, one of his uncles or brothers and one of his sisters in the classificatory sense.

These envoys speak to the woman's mother and uncles assembled together. If they agree, they go to ask for the assent of the head of the lineage. The men and women of the woman's lineage drink together a liter of tafia brought by the envoys. Before drinking, the doyen of the lineage pours a little of it on the ground while invoking the ancestors, asking them to perpetuate the accord of the household and to grant them health and fecundity. This ceremony is made on the spot and they do not go to the fraga tiki, for they would be afraid to present themselves again at the fraga tiki in case of a break-up; prayer said anywhere in the village is not binding.

The two envoys, man and woman, play a very precise role. The man represents the postulant (it is a sort of marriage by proxy).

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[837]
[613]

/152 cont./

Since it is forbidden to have two wives at the same time in the same lineage, that produced a scandal and his uncles had to intervene so that he would not be beaten.

After that, without leaving M..., he took officially another wife, A... (Papaïston). They lived together nearly [839] eight years, but A... began to deceive him while he was on a [586] trip. The first time, he only threatened her; the third time he repudiated her.

• [619] Again he officially took another wife, T..., a Djuka from the Tapanahoni.

[589] A year later A..., who wished she had him back, had her uncles intervene so that she might come back into his favor. G..., through deference to her uncles, accepted against his will.

Thus he found himself engaged in three unions, M..., [586] A..., and T.... He thought this situation was leading him to ruin and sacrificed T... although he had no fault to find with her.

[586] Some time afterward A... began to deceive him again and he repudiated her once and for all.

Finally he took a last wife, B... (Asisi), by whom he had no children.

On each of these undertakings he had to submit to violent scenes by his first wife M..., who was very attached to him and would have liked to keep him for herself alone. Nevertheless, she never divorced him and did not provoke difficulties with her co-wives.

[842] He had a child by M... after more than 15 years of sterile marriage.

In 1958 G... was living with M... and B..., who got along well together. He was not looking for any more new adventures.

/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

761 /159/ Death; Burial Rites

795 Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity. In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrika of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus [619] set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimɛ̃ (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmɛ̃ (grave-diggers), some others wasimɛ̃ (bathers of the dead).

767 587 Kisimɛ̃ and ɔlɔmɛ̃. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmɛ̃ and kisimɛ̃ constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/191 cont./

What constitutes the religion of the Refugee Blacks is a synthesis of elements originating with various peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti, Agni, Mina, and Fon and also Congolese elements. This synthesis seems to have been born among the Saramaka, the first tribe formed at the beginning of the 18th century, and to have been adopted thereafter with modifications of detail by the Djuka, tribe created about 1760. The Boni, the last tribe formed, probably received these beliefs during the time of slavery which they spent under the tutelage of the Djuka, from 1815 to 1860. The beliefs of the Boni and those of the Djuka have an identical base; the rites and their effects on social life are exactly the same. Nevertheless, the Djuka, almost ten times more numerous, have been able to keep very differentiated conceptions and specialized cults, involving priests in the literal sense of the term.

The Boni have kept only the essentials, and many conceptions, especially the myths which serve as support for the whole tradition, are very much blurred among them.

The Boni like to imagine that Africans constitute only one nation, and that they have inherited in a lump the traditions and social forms of this nation. They know now (especially from having seen a good deal of the Senegalese riflemen of the 1937 French mission) that numerous tribes exist, but that has not shaken the veneration they have for Africa, source, for them, of all knowledge and all strength. However, almost nothing of the culture peculiar to each one of the great tribes has reached them; no name of an African nation has remained in their memory, and /192/ none of the languages of their land of origin has been kept (1); everywhere the vehicular language

1. One observes, however, that a certain number of disconnected details of African life have come down to them by oral tradition;

/214 cont./

787 their legs with this white clay; they prophesy in a singing tone, without the usual voice of their bearer's ceasing to be recognizable, expressing themselves in the Saramaka language.

796 The Ampuku have the appearance of men similar to Blacks, but unknown. They reside in the depths of the woods; [84] some are good, others bad. One can gain their good will by worshiping them, which is especially developed in Saramaka country.

796 Baliki, of Kormotibo village, tells of having been present 535 one day at a dance of the Ampuku, when he was traveling to [103] the Saramaka village of Baïen.

"During the day, people went on the paths far into the bush to put down calabashes containing certain herbs. At night were seen to come out of the forest a large number of unknown men, dressed in the manner of the Saramaka. They danced all night, and at dawn left again as they had come."

796 The Ampuku gods, considered to be maleficent gods of [789] the bush, exercise their influence on everyone. When a person [824] has slept in the bush, he "washes" himself free of Ampuku with an infusion of leaves of five plants which are part of the secondary flora surrounding the villages and of which the principal plant is the sangaafu (Costus cylindricus).

791 Frequency of possession. In 1956 teachers or bas were very 787 scarce in Boni country. For the Kumenti gods, only S... (Kotika) remained; for the Papa gadu, since the death of Antinon (Dju), there remained only M... (Papalison) and S... [619] (Atisi). People were commonly going to receive instruction from Djuka teachers in the villages of the Tapanaoni.

789 It would be a great error to believe that nearly all the 562 men have gods. On the contrary, this is an exception. According to the evaluations we were able to make, there is not more than one adult man out of six or seven who is possessed.

/728 cont./

A kumu is exercised by a Dipélu yaka, borne in 1958 by a Loka woman. It is invoked before the fraga tiki of l'Enfant Perdu village (Dipélu I). Sometimes a broko dii is celebrated for it in the same forms as the ceremony of the eighth day after death.

We have likewise not been able to collect complete information on the kumu of the Kotika lineage. This lineage, divided into three fractions, forms a unit with respect to the kumu.

A kumu is exercised by the yaka of a Surinam Creole assassinated in former times by a member of the lineage. Its bearer in 1958 was Todo (K1, E48), a man of the Kotika lineage living in Boniville. In 1958 a young woman of the lineage, Awimi (K1, E37), died suddenly; the yaka revealed that it had struck Awimi because she had a liaison with Sintamaan (K2, E145), thus committing gikadu. The idea of the collective responsibility of the lineage is so deeply accepted by the Boni that the near relatives of the dead woman did not reproach Sintamaan at all.

/728/ A yaka of the Kotika lineage may exercise a kumu on the Djuka. This is the case of an affair going back to 1950: a young woman died some time after having a serious discussion with a Djuka woman who had hit her. Deaths among the Djuka these last years had been attributed to its vengeance.

It seems that there is no other kumu exercised by a Djuka upon a Boni lineage and vice versa. This is surprising, considering the fights which in former times set the two nations against each other.

The Djuka and Saramaka living isolated in the midst of the Boni know their kumu, which were revealed to them in childhood. In case of sickness, they employ divinatory procedures in order to know what kumu is concerned, then they make offerings. But in case of serious illness, they are forced to go back to the village of origin of their lineage.

/234 cont./

628 613 to resist and fled to Bonville, where some took refuge in the water, others in the bush. About ten shacks were broken (without great damage), principally kitchens and empty sheds. Only one man could be caught and he received several punches.

The expedition of April, 1957 against the villages of L'Enfant Perdu and Kormotibo did not do much more harm. Only one good house was smashed, that of Akwali (Dip. II, Kormotibo) because its owner, passing by in a boat on the river, insulted the aggressors....

784 613 619 648

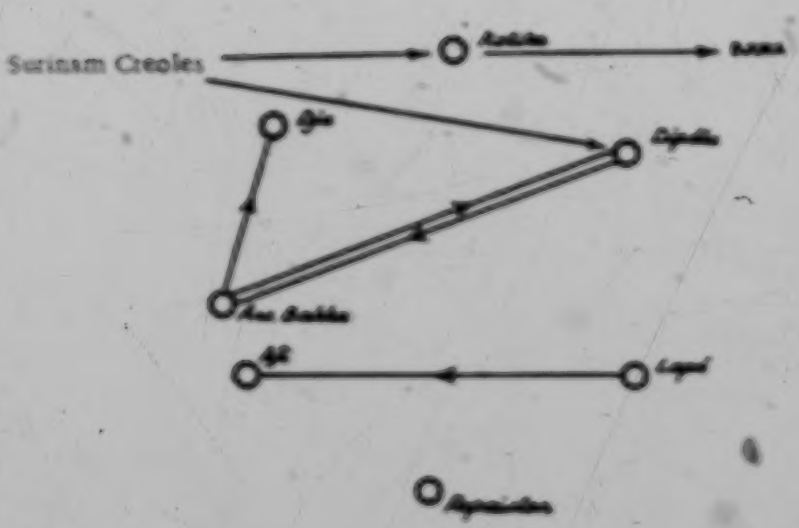


Fig. 28. Schema of the kunu exercised upon one another by the various lineages.

/292 cont./

Relations with the Other Populations

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The tribes of Refugee Blacks do not constitute a closed world. They have lived since their formation in close symbiosis with the neighboring populations: autochthonous Indians, Europeans, and Creoles. Their traditions and their conception of life have been strongly influenced by these, not because they have lost anything of their interior unity, but because they have accepted, at least collectively, the idea that they have bonds and duties toward other men.

177 829

Just as their economy on the material plane is based on exchange, so they consider the symbiosis of their group with the neighboring groups as the normal order of the universe. The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors have given them an extreme horror of violence; they consider peace a precious blessing common to all nations, and their moral principles which forbid harming anyone extend to all men. It is clear that these notions are less clearly understood on the individual level and that there are, as elsewhere, some thefts and abuses of trust. But, on /293/ the collective level, the relations between the Refugee Blacks and their neighbors are established on a base of trust, loyalty, and honesty not found to the same degree in Africa.

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619 [643]

Relations with the other tribes. The Boni do not have any well-defined political ties with the other tribes of Refugee Blacks, but the grand men have semiofficial relations through the medium of messengers, and consult one another rather frequently.

[578]

The Boni have harbored a tenacious resentment against the Djuka for having in former times allied themselves with the Dutch against them, but this resentment, chiefly collective in nature, has died down with time; it does not prevent individual relations from being cordial.

6:Humanit--465 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/293 cont./

619 829 The Saramaka are very highly esteemed everywhere, for it is unanimously assumed that their magic is stronger, their techniques more perfected, than those of the other tribes.

175 648 Relations with the Indians. The relations between the Boni and the Oayana Indians are extremely curious and interesting. They were probably established from the end of the 18th century on. Several writers have stated that Boni and Indians fought each other for a long time; the examination we made of authentic archive documents, unfortunately few in number, capable of throwing light on the history of the Maroni, does not confirm this hypothesis (1). One can think on the contrary that symbiotic

175 726 1. The only combats pointed out took place about 1840 between the Boni and the Wayakulé "Oyaricoulets" Indians, a very primitive tribe who lived on the Oulémari and was itself at war with the Oayana.

175 648 729 The Boni were certainly already allied with the Oayana at the time of the battles on the Maroni in 1793, since after their defeat the survivors, grouped around Agoïa son of Boni, took refuge on the Maruini River which they went up as far as the region of its sources, where nobody could catch up with them. Now it was precisely there that the Oayana Indians were living at the end of the 18th century. They would not have tried this maneuver if they had not had the certainty of finding refuge